



State Parks' Vision for the Central Valley

California State Parks is holding a series of workshops in urban centers and small agricultural towns throughout the Central Valley. State Parks is asking ***“What special natural or scenic places, recreational opportunities, and historic sites should be protected as units of the State Park System before these areas are lost forever?”*** People of all ethnic backgrounds and languages, community activists, environmental organizations, chambers of commerce, public agencies, schools and businesses are encouraged to attend.

State Parks Director Ruth Coleman set the tone and direction for this discussion by having her department initiate a project in July 2003 to create a 20-year blueprint for State Parks' actions in the Central Valley. The project was guided by a 25 member Policy Oversight Committee composed of a broad spectrum of Valley interests. The Committee was challenged by the specter of dramatic population increases in the Valley; the fact that previous funding programs have largely ignored the Central Valley; and the need to take action to protect significant resources while they are still available

The Central Valley is defined as all or part of 18 counties within the Sacramento and the San Joaquin Valleys from Redding to Bakersfield and generally extends along the mountain ranges to the 2000 foot elevation. Today the Central Valley is home to more than 5.7 million people and by the year 2040, the California Department of Finance projects more than 11.5 million people will live in the Valley - nearly a 100% increase. The Valley is growing at a rate 20-25% higher than in California coastal areas.

The Central Valley Vision recommends a four pronged approach to meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse Central Valley. State Parks believes that it can better serve the needs of the public through a conscientious program of protecting lands, resources and developing facilities at existing and selected new units.

- **Expanding recreational facilities to accommodate larger families and groups in existing parks along river corridors, at Valley reservoirs and in the Delta.**
- **Expanding landholdings at existing parks and acquiring new parklands along major river corridors** particularly where an opportunity exists to link state parks and other lands in public ownership.
- **Acquiring lands that preserve and protect vanishing natural resources**, such as blue oak and sycamore woodlands, and native grasslands.
- **Better preserving and interpreting the rich history connected to the Valley's past.**

At the workshops, State Parks will be asking.....

What special places should be protected before they are lost?

What special stories need to be told and where are the best places to tell them?

What recreational facilities, of the kind found in State Parks, are most needed?

For more information, please contact 916 653-9901 or www.parks.ca.gov. or email Nina Gordon, Planning Division Chief, at ngordon@parks.ca.gov.